

# Wanda Vázquez Garced

**Wanda Vázquez Garced** (born July 9, 1960)<sup>[5][6]</sup> is a Puerto Rican politician and attorney who has been the Governor of Puerto Rico since August 7, 2019.<sup>[7][8]</sup> Prior to her tenure as governor, she served as the 19th Secretary of justice from 2017 to 2019. A member of the New Progressive Party and Republican Party of Puerto Rico, Vázquez Garced is the second female governor in Puerto Rico history after Sila María Calderón. She assumed the office following the resignation of Ricardo Roselló and the judicial annulation of Pedro Pierluisi's short-lived government in the aftermath of the Telegramgate Scandal. On August 16 she failed to secure the New Progressive Party nomination to Pedro Pierluisi for Governor of Puerto Rico in the 2020 elections.

Garced's accession to the governorship was at the epicenter of a landmark decision by the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico in the case of Senado de Puerto Rico v. Hon. Pedro R. Pierluisi,<sup>[9]</sup> by which Puerto Rico highest court derogated a clause added by Puerto Rico Law # 7 of 2005 (Law No. 7-2005) to the Constitution of Puerto Rico, annulled Pedro Pierluisi's government, and reinforced the 1952 Constitutional provisions for succession of government.

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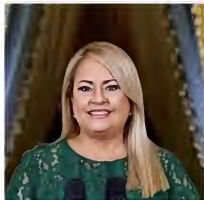
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## Early life and education

### Wanda Vázquez



#### Governor of Puerto Rico

##### Incumbent

##### Assumed office

August 7, 2019

**Preceded by** Ricardo Roselló

Pedro Pierluisi (*de facto*)

#### 19th Secretary of Justice of Puerto Rico

##### In office

January 2, 2017 – August 7, 2019

**Governor** Ricardo Roselló

Pedro Pierluisi (*de facto*)

**Preceded by** César Miranda

**Succeeded by** Dennise Longo Quiñones<sup>[1]</sup>

##### Personal details

**Born** July 9, 1960

San Juan, Puerto Rico

**Political party** New Progressive

**Other political** Democratic (before 2019)<sup>[2]</sup>

**affiliations** Republican (2019–present)<sup>[3][4]</sup>

**Spouse(s)** Jorge Díaz Reverón

**Children** 2

**Residence** La Fortaleza

**Education** University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras (BA)  
Interamerican University of Puerto Rico (JD)

Vázquez Garced was born in Santurce, San Juan and raised in Guaynabo.<sup>[5]</sup> Her parents worked in a factory, her father as a security guard, her mother died at the age of 53. Her father has been remarried for twenty years. She has a younger brother and an older sister. She began her primary studies at the Ramón Marín and Margarita Janer schools in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico.<sup>[10]</sup> Vázquez became interested in law at an early age. She said in an interview that she used to watch TV shows like Hawaii Five-O with her father, which led her to realize she wanted to follow a career along that line. Vázquez studied at the University of Puerto Rico, where she completed her bachelor's degree. After that, she completed her Juris doctor (J.D.) at the Interamerican University of Puerto Rico School of Law.<sup>[11]</sup>

**Website**

Government website (<https://www.fortaleza.pr.gov/>)

## Career

During the 1980s, Vázquez worked for the Puerto Rico Department of Housing. She then worked as a district attorney for the Puerto Rico Department of Justice for 20 years. Vázquez specialized in cases of domestic and gender violence. She also worked in the Criminal Division for the Bayamón Prosecutor's office.

In 2010, Vázquez was appointed to replace Ivonne Feliciano as the head of the Office for Women's Rights of the island.<sup>[12]</sup> On November 30, 2016, Governor-elect Ricardo Rosselló nominated her for the position of Secretary of Justice of Puerto Rico. She was confirmed and sworn in January 18, 2017.<sup>[13]</sup>

## Governor of Puerto Rico

Vázquez Garced was initially expected to become governor of Puerto Rico after the resignation of Ricardo Rosselló on August 2, 2019.<sup>[14][15]</sup> She was met with opposition, with critics calling for her resignation due to allegations of corruption and inability to deal with domestic violence on the island. Protests against her proposed succession as governor took place, the most notable of these being the *Somos Más* march, Spanish for "We Are More", a title alluding to a popular chant during the protests calling for Rosselló's resignation.<sup>[16]</sup> The hashtag *#WandaRenuncia* (Spanish for "Wanda Resign") began trending on Twitter soon after Rosselló announced his intention to resign.<sup>[17][18][19][20]</sup> Vázquez said on Twitter that she had no interest in becoming governor,<sup>[21]</sup> and that she would take the position only if she were constitutionally required to.<sup>[22]</sup>



Wanda Vázquez Garced meeting with U.S. Congressman Don Young in November 2019.

On July 31, Rosselló announced that he was appointing Pedro Pierluisi as the new Secretary of State; the secretary of state supersedes the secretary of justice in the order of succession.<sup>[23]</sup> On August 1, however, the Puerto Rican Senate blocked Pierluisi from being confirmed as secretary of state in time for Rosselló's resignation on August 2.<sup>[24]</sup> Upon Rosselló's resignation, Pierluisi succeeded to the governorship in a *de facto* manner instead of Vázquez. However, he was not confirmed by the Senate, calling into question the validity of his governorship.<sup>[25]</sup>

On August 7, 2019, the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico ruled that Pierluisi was sworn in on unconstitutional grounds and removed him from office, effective at 5 p.m. AST. At that time, Vázquez became the second female governor of Puerto Rico.<sup>[26][27]</sup>

Vázquez stated she wants to recover Hurricane Maria relief funds, and review all government contracts to ensure they are managed correctly, free of corruption. She said she wants to work with President Donald Trump to help the island of Puerto Rico and its 3.2 million American citizens.<sup>[28]</sup> She stated all contracts signed by Ricardo Rosselló would be reviewed.<sup>[29]</sup> At the same time, HUD (Housing and Urban Development) stated that hurricane funds would be delayed to Puerto Rico due to corruption, and incapacity to absorb funds for projects, respectively.<sup>[30]</sup>



Wanda Vázquez during her meeting with Chris Murphy, U.S. Senator from Connecticut.

In the aftermath of 2019–20 Puerto Rico earthquakes residents discovered unused aid from Hurricane Maria in a warehouse in Ponce and as a result Vázquez fired her emergency management director.<sup>[31]</sup> On July 21, 2020, the Puerto Rico Office of the Special Independent Prosecutor's Panel opened a case against Vázquez for alleged violation of the Commonwealth's ethics law, as well as federal regulations, related to her handling of aid to the earthquake victims.<sup>[32]</sup> She responded by accusing the judge in charge of the investigation of being a supporter of her primary elections challenger Pedro Pierluisi. Vázquez was ordered by the panel to present evidence in the form of photos which she claimed demonstrated that political motives were behind the investigation, but she failed to provide said evidence.<sup>[33]</sup>

On March 12, 2020, Vázquez Garced declared a state of emergency for Puerto Rico and activated the Puerto Rican National Guard as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in Puerto Rico.<sup>[34]</sup>

## 2020 Primaries

On August 16, 2020, Vazquez Garced lost the gubernatorial primary race to Pedro Pierluisi. With 75.6% of voting stations reporting, Pierluisi had won about 57.9% of the votes to Vazquez's 42.1%, clinching the nomination for New Progressive Party. Pierluisi claimed victory after Vazquez recognized his lead and said she respected the will of voters.<sup>[35][36]</sup>

## Personal life

Vázquez is married to Jorge Díaz Reverón, a judge in Caguas, Puerto Rico. She has two daughters, Stephanie and Beatriz Díaz Vázquez.<sup>[14]</sup>

## See also

- List of female governors in the United States
- List of party switchers in the United States
- Telegramgate

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# External links

- [Gobernador de Puerto Rico Official Site - La Fortaleza \(https://www.fortaleza.pr.gov/conoce/gobernador/\)](https://www.fortaleza.pr.gov/conoce/gobernador/)
- [Wanda Vázquez Garced \(https://twitter.com/wandavazquezg\)](https://twitter.com/wandavazquezg) on [Twitter](#)

Legal offices		
Preceded by <b>César Miranda</b>	<b>Secretary of Justice of Puerto Rico</b> 2017–2019	Succeeded by <b>Dennise Longo Quiñones</b>
Political offices		
Preceded by <b>Pedro Pierluisi</b> ( <i>de facto</i> )	<b>Governor of Puerto Rico</b> 2019–present	<b>Incumbent</b>

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